Akan Ananse Stories, Yorùbá Ìjàpá Tales, and the Dikènga Theory: Worldview and Structure

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Akan Ananse Stories, Yorùbá Ìjápá Tales, and the Dikënga Theory: Worldview and Structure

Obádélé Kambon

Abstract

In this paper, we aim to use Dikënga, the cosmogram of the Bakôngo, as an Afrikan cosmological, philosophical, conceptual, and theoretical framework to analyze the structure of Akan Ananse and Yorùbá Ìjápá stories. According to Fu-Kiau, “nothing exists that does not follow the steps of the cyclical Kongo cosmogram” (Fu-Kiau 1994: 26). This bold hypothesis is tested in this study by applying what we term the “Dikënga theory of literary analysis” to the aforementioned stories. We find that this theoretical framework can help us shift away from concepts of “storylines” and “timelines” to reveal the patterned and cyclical nature of material, spatial and temporal phenomena. Further, we find such an approach may deepen our understanding of these stories as manifestations of a shared Afrikan worldview.

Keywords: Ananse, Ìjápá, Dikënga, worldview, structure

Resume

Dans cet article, nous visons à utiliser Dikenga, le cosmogramme du Bakôngo, comme un cadre cosmologique, philosophique, théorique et conceptuel Afrikan pour analyser la structure des histoires d'Akan Ananse et Yorùbá Ìjápá. Selon Fu-Kiau, "il n'existe rien qui ne suit pas les étapes du cosmogramme Kongo cyclique" (Fu-Kiau 1994: 26). Cette hypothèse audacieuse est testée dans cette étude en appliquant ce que nous appelons la «théorie Dikenga de l'analyse littéraire» aux histoires susmentionnées. Nous trouvons que ce cadre théorique peut nous aider à nous éloigner des concepts de «scénarios» et de «délais» pour révéler la nature structurale et cyclique des phénomènes matériels, spatiaux et temporels. De plus, nous trouvons une telle approche peut approfondir notre compréhension de ces histoires comme des manifestations d'une vision du monde Afrikan partagée.

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This article is dedicated to the loving memory of my late Kikôngo teacher, N'kulu Kimbwandende kia Bunseki Fu-Kiáu, "true of voice," and the late Baba Henry Ervin Van Kirksey, "true of voice."
Introduction

This article will examine parallels between Akan Ananse ‘Spider’ stories and Yoruba Òjàpá ‘Tortoise’ tales with regard to worldview and structure. Dikenga, the Kongo Cosmogram, will be advanced and tested as to whether it may be regarded as a manifestation of a shared Afrikan worldview. Secondly, the structure of these stories will be analyzed using what is advanced in this article as the “Dikenga Theory of Oral (and Written) Literary Structure.” While various applications of Dikenga can be found in the literature, it is undoubtedly unprecedented to use a theoretical framework from Kongo to describe, explain, and analyze stories found in modern-day Ghana and Nigeria (Martinez-Ruiz 2007, Morgan 2011). This begs the question of why, therefore, would the Dikenga cosmogram be used in this structural literary analysis of these stories? The answer is simple. In Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah’s speech entitled “the African Genius” inaugurating the official opening of the University of Ghana’s Institute of African Studies, he asserted that:

One essential function of this Institute must surely be to study the history, culture and institutions, languages and arts of Ghana and of Africa in new Afrikan-centred ways (Nkrumah 1963). (emphasis mine).

In this light, simply because such an endeavor is unprecedented, that, alone, should not dissuade one staying true to the course of studying Afrika in new Afrikan-centered ways. Rather, Afrikan scholars have the responsibility to pursue such uncharted courses as an intentional divergence from the propositions and pre-suppositions of the colonial epoch of the past or those of the neo-colonial epoch, in which we currently find ourselves (Nkrumah 1963). In this same vein, it becomes imperative to transcend Afrika’s largely arbitrary Berlin-conference-inherited borders in an attempt to study things Afrikan in new Afrikan-centered ways by showing how countless Afrikans, irrespective of their location, share the core cosmological principles as manifested in the Dikenga cosmogram. Moreover, if we can and

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2 As I have argued elsewhere. Afrika (n.)/Afrikan (adj.) is preferred to “Africa” whenever possible as the word is consistently spelled in various Afrikan languages with a /k/.
do, indeed, often use “Western” or Eurasian (most notably English, French, German, Russian, Greek, etc.) concepts and conceptual frameworks under the guise of universality to analyze Afrikan literature and other Afrikan phenomena, then we can certainly utilize concepts from Afrika for the same purpose. In other words, if those demonstrably foreign concepts and analytical tools can be said to be universal and/or applicable to the Afrikan context, then Afrikan tools can, at the very least, be applied to Afrika, the global Afrikan world, and possibly beyond.

Another reason for using Dikenga is that much of the study in Afrika and of Afrika – not just literary study – operates from what may be termed a “forward/backward” paradigm. This is to say, Afrikans of the continent and elsewhere in the Afrikan world tend to look “forwards” to Eurasians for theoretical frameworks and then look back towards the individual ethnic group (or village) as the object of study. Here, it is argued that it may rather be useful for us to look laterally within the rich tradition of Afrikan deep thought for theoretical frameworks and conceptual paradigms. Another way of looking at it is to say that Afrikan-centered may also entail a composite Afrikan approach, which looks at underlying commonalities in addition to the more prevalent culturally/linguistically/ethnically/nationally-specific approach which focuses primarily or solely on individual pre-colonial or neo-colonial fragments of the whole. A composite approach, on the other hand, empowers one with the ability to broaden one’s world view to deal with the global Afrikan world instead of dismembered and disconnected segments (Armah 2010).

As further justification of this approach, Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah gave yet another ideological imperative stating unequivocally that the Institute of African Studies should necessarily:

[...] conceive its function as being to study Africa, in the widest possible sense – Africa in all its complexity and diversity, and its underlying unity [...] not limited by conventional territorial or regional boundaries. These investigations must inevitably lead outwards — to the exploration of the connections between [...] the cultures of other African peoples and other regions of Africa. Ghana, that is to say, can only be understood in the total African context (Nkrumah 1963) (emphasis mine).

Thus, Nkrumah’s charge to Afrikan scholars gives us the ideological motivation and clarity of thought with regard to the task of uncovering the

3 Note that Europe and Asia are one landmass – Eurasia. Thus, this term is preferred instead of arbitrarily choosing to label them as separate entities as is common practice in much of the English-speaking world.
connections between Afrikan people through Afrikan literature in the form of Akan Ananse and Yorùbá Òjápá stories.

Ananse ‘Spider’ stories – in which the spider is often the central character – come from Akan-speaking areas as indicated on the map in Figure 1. The group is composed of sub-groups such as Asante, Fante, Akwapim, Akyem, Denkyira, Bono, etc. Òjápá ‘Tortoise’ tales – which, similarly, often feature the tortoise as the central character – come from Yorùbá land comprising Òyó, Èkó, Ègbá, Èkitì, etc. The Dikênga theoretical framework used comes from the Kôngo kingdom composed of Esíkôngo, Bavili, etc.

![Diachronic Map of Pre-Colonial Afrikan Empires](image)

**Figure 1: Diachronic Map of Pre-Colonial Afrikan Empires (Israel 2007)**

With regard to scope, 65 written Òjápá tales and 90 written Ananse stories were studied and analyzed (Rattray 1930, Babalola 1973, 1979, Hutchison 1994). Additionally, 23 oral Âlò àpamọ “riddle stories” and 4 oral Âlò àpagbè “narrative stories,” as well as 57 oral Ananse stories from various sources including personal recordings, were studied (Trustees 2009, Bolajiutube 2012, Masters 2012, Afolayan 2013, Hassan 2013). In short, about 239 tales were consulted in total in pursuit commonalities in terms of structure and worldview.

As mentioned above, the Dikênga cosmogram will be used for the structural analysis of the tales studied. As articulated by Fu-Kiau:
According to Kongo teaching, nothing exists that does not follow the steps of the cyclical Kongo cosmogram. People, animals, inventions, social systems, and so on are conceived (yakwa/yindulwa) and live through a kind of pregnancy (Stage 1), are born (butwa) (Stage 2), mature (kula) (Stage 3), and die (fwa) at the collision stage in order to undergo change (Stage 4) (Fu-Kiau 1994: 26-7) (emphasis mine).

It is particularly important to note that Fu-Kiau does not limit the scope of that which follows the Dikènga cycle solely to Congolese phenomena, but rather asserts that nothing exists that does not follow the steps outlined – including the universe and creation itself. This quote is particularly important because it makes a strong prediction and presents a testable hypothesis which is essentially that if all things are said to follow the steps of the cyclical Dikènga Cosmogram, then indigenous stories should also be able to be evaluated within the Dikènga structural framework. Therefore, in this article, Akan Ananse stories and Yorùbá Ìjápá tales will be analyzed to prove or disprove this assertion under the logical proposition that any phenomenon that is held to be true universally should also be true for any subset of the whole – especially when that subset is derived from a common foundational Afrikan worldview. Indeed, if, in theory, all things follow these steps, so too should these stories.

Worldview

It is in this light that the Dikènga cosmogram can serve as a viable alternative that, in time, may come to supplant currently dominant structural frameworks used in the analysis of oral and/or written literature. Indeed, quite recently, we find literary scholars who are still using Freytag's model to say that narratives go from exposition to a rising action, climax, falling action, and then denouement (Freytag 1863, McIntyre 2006, Kubbecka 2014). While pyramids themselves are Afrikan phenomena with the vast majority of them constructed far into the interior of Afrika in the country now known as Sudan, if we are to adopt a pyramid structure analogy in application to narrative structure, such an application should be couched in terms of the cosmological
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significance of pyramids to Afrikan people. Moreover, it is argued that if, indeed, scholars can use Freytag’s appropriation of the Afrikan pyramid as shown in Figure 2, then most certainly any contemporary Afrikan scholar of oral (and/or written) literature should not shy away from using other, perhaps more appropriate endogenous structural frameworks rooted in the Afrikan worldview.

To elucidate, Dikenga, also known as Tendwa nza Kongo as shown in Figure 3, is a cosmogram of the Bâkongo ‘People of the Congo’ featuring four major stage markers around the perimeter of a circle.

According to Fu-Kiau, the stage known as Musoni is the stage of the conception of ideas, human beings, and all things conceivable. Musoni corresponds to when the sun is at midnight and is represented by a yellow color. Although the sun has set and therefore cannot be seen directly by the observer, it is understood to still exist. Similarly, when a person dies, he/she is understood to still exist in the same fundamental way as the human being is conceived of as ntângu a moyo ‘a living sun’ (Fu-Kiau 1994: 26).

By the same token, matter is not created or destroyed – it simply changes form. One of the most ancient instantiations of this concept is found in the classical Nile Valley wherein we find the concept of ḥpr ‘exist, be, come into being, become, change (into), occur, happen, come to pass’ which incorporates notions of transformation from one state/stage of being to another (Dickson 2006: 299). While this is a principle fundamental to physics, as exemplified in the law of conservation of energy and the law of conservation of mass, it is something that has been known by the Bakôngo and many other Afrikan people for millennia as the fundamental cosmological basis of countless cultural expressions including libation, sacrifice, ancestor veneration, reincarnation names, etc. However, the

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4 Because the same word, ntângu is used for both ‘sun’ and ‘time’ in Kikôngo, this could also be translated as ‘vital time, time of life’ as in the cited text.
difference is that when Afrikanans say it, it is oftentimes termed as “pagan and heathen” but then when physicists tell us the exact same thing, it goes unquestioned. Needless to say, such a state of affairs is problematic for many reasons.

After Musoni, the next stage is Kala, illustrated in Black, which represents birth, sunrise, and, in this case, the beginning of the story. Next, Tukula, associated with the color red, represents the sun at noon. It corresponds to the highest point in a person’s life and the highest point in the story as will be demonstrated. The next stage is Luvèmba, shown in a grey color. This represents sunset. This is the stage of the transformation that occurs when a person passes on. However, in the Afrikan worldview, this is not truly the end. Indeed, Fu-Kiau asserts that “Dying is not an end. Dying for the Kongo is just going on vacation” (Fu-Kiau 2001b). The underlying concept is articulated in the proverb “’Tufwanga mu sober — we die in order to undergo change” (Fu-Kiau 1994: 27) Luvèmba is where the story comes to its closing formula but continues to exist in other forms. According to Fu-Kiau, worth quoting at length:

The Kongo cosmogram is the foundation of Kongo society. The circle made by the sun’s movement is the first geometric picture given to human beings. We move the same way the sun moves: we wake up, are active, die, then come back. [...] This cosmogram is in constant motion, as the circle is in motion (Fu-Kiau 2001b) (emphasis mine).

Thus, Dikenga provides an extended analogy for understanding story structure superimposed upon the four cardinal points of the circle. Musoni, is the idea of the story; it is the ngìnga ‘seed’; it is conception at midnight. Kala is the beginning of the story like dawn or the transformation occurring from a child’s transition from the ancestral realm via birth up to the naming ceremony; the formal rising of the story as a living sun. Significantly, rituals such as naming ceremonies that mark transitions from one stage of life to another are comparable to opening formulae in stories, which also mark the transition from one stage to another; from the ideational state to realization via storytelling. Tukula is the climax of the story which is analogous to the climax of one’s life which, for Afrikan people, is also marked with ritual such as being instated, enskinned or enstooled as a ruler of one’s people. Likewise, Luvèmba is end of the story, which is like the ayie ‘funeral’ (Akan) or isinkú ‘funeral/burial’ (Yorùbá) which are, in turn, comparable to the closing formulae which mark the end of the story (Fu-Kiau 1991, 1994, 2001a).

Although Dikenga is used in this article due to its poignant articulation and visualization of these ideas and principles, these types of solar metaphors
and analogies are found not only among the Bakongo people but are common throughout Afrika and can even be found in other parts of the global Afrikan world. Among the Yoruba, for example, proverbs exist such as:

1. *Ayé* 1*pl*  *bá ‘Fá* [...] *ŏsăn gangan nigbàgbọ*  
   World  FOC 1pl  join Ifá  [...]  noon exactly  FOC-belief  
   *wọlẹ*  dé.  
   enter-house  arrive.  
   ‘We came to meet Ifá (Yoruba divination system) in the world [...] It was not until high noon that Christianity appeared on the scene.’  
   (Adelowo 2014: 340)

What the proverb in example (1) demonstrates is a conceptualization of the entire history of Yoruba people since creation as a single day saying that it was not until relatively recently that Christianity came on the scene. The concept is also evinced in common Yoruba names such as Bántálé:

2. *Bá-n-tálé*  
   join-me-up to-night  
   ‘Stay with me until night’ (i.e., do not die young)

   In this analogy, night is not conceived of in terms of the time span of a single day, but rather as part of the entire lifespan of a human being. The name, Bántálé, therefore means “do not die young.” We can also find examples of sun-position-as-life-stage analogies within Yoruba *Ijápá* stories themselves, such as in the following selections:

3. *Awọn jāndùkù*  *diè*  *t’ó*  *yinnű*  *sí*  
   PL  ruffian  few  REL 3SG  poke out nose to  
   *ikéde*  *yìi*  *fì*  *òrun*  *jìfà*  
   announcement  DEM  take  sky  obtain-reward  
   *l’ọsăngangan aiyé*  *wọn.*  
   at’high-noon world 3PL  
   ‘Those few ruffians who flouted this announcement were executed before the (successful) completion of their lives’ (Babalola 1979: 84)

5 Although orthographical standards for writing Yoruba have changed, examples here are given as they appear in the original text.
Eni  t’ó  l’ókò  á  di
Someone  REL’3SG  have’husband  HAB  become

opó  l’ósângangan.
widow  at’high-noon

‘A married woman would suddenly become a widow.’ (Babalola 1979: 28)

There is also a common idiom in Yorùbá that uses a solar position analogy:

5.  Àdrò  ojó
morning  day
‘Childhood’ (Fabunmi 1985: 11)

Similar sun-position-as-life-stage analogies exist among the Akan people. In lyrics from a song called “M’adamfo” by Bisa Kdei, he cites the following well-known Akan proverb:

6.  Adamfofa  nso  nti  na  òtwe
Friend-making  also  therefore  FOC  duiker

nya-a  n’awia-wu.
obtain-COMPL  3SG.POSS’sunshine-death.

‘It is because of friendship that the small antelope/duiker died young.’ (Kdei 2013)

In other words, the duiker did not get all the way to the “evening” of its life or it did not reach old age. A comparable example is found in the following libation text:

7.  Mo-m-ma  ye-n-nya  amane,  
2PL-NEG-allow  IPL-NEG-obtain  catastrophe,  

Mo-m-ma  yen  ani  m-fira,  
2PL-NEG-allow  IPL  eye  NEG-wrap,  

Mo-m-ma  yen  aso  n-si,  
2PL-NEG-allow  IPL  ear  NEG-clog,  

Mo-m-ma  ye-n-wu  awia-wu.  
2PL-NEG-allow  IPL-NEG-die  sunshine-death.  

‘Don’t allow us to encounter disaster, don’t allow us to become blind, don’t allow us to become deaf, don’t allow us to die young.’ (Mensah 2010).
Dzobo cites another Akan libation text in translation keeping with this same theme:

8. Don’t let me die in the day.
    Don’t let me die at night,
    Don’t let me die at all,
    But let me die.

In Dzobo’s discussion of the text, he explains thusly:

The point of the first is fairly obvious, but that of the second needs some explaining. In the second one, which is a prayer proverb, the individual expresses his desire to see and appreciate the beauty of life and nature (line one) and to be sexually active (line two) so as to fulfill his creative being and have many children who may perpetuate his name, beliefs and philosophy of life (line three). After he has fulfilled his destiny he would be happy to join the fathers (line 4). In this proverb we see the indigenous understanding of life and death as polar opposites, which complement each other. (Dzobo 1992: 98)

Again, the first line is about living life to its fullest and reaching eldership and uses the analogy to refer to the entire life span. The lifespan reference is layered on top of “don’t let me die at night,” which is but a single day’s duration saying that night is the time at which procreation (and conception) occurs. We see, quite profoundly, that the libation text itself extends and layers these analogies at different levels (a lifetime/a day’s duration) demonstrating an awareness of the philosophical and cosmological principles found in Dikênga. This idea is echoed in the Akan goldweight proverb Abodee ne abrahb mu ntaa ‘Creation and life (are) twins’ (Ofori-Ansa 1997). A major point, as correctly noted by Dzobo, is the notion of complementarity. It is very important to understand that these ideas are conceptualized by Afrikan people as complementary opposites (both necessary parts of a whole) in contradistinction with more prototypically Eurasian conceptions of diametric opposites wherein what are actually two aspects of the same thing are typically seen as being against or in conflict with each other.
While this sun-position-as-life-stage analogy is common to the Bakôngo, Yorûbá, and Akan, it is also interesting to note that this analogy has persisted among Afrikan from elsewhere in the global Afrikan world as well as seen in Figure 4. By way of another example, in the song “Nightshift,” the Commodores — not known by any stretch of the imagination for their particularly “Afrikan-centered consciousness” — nonetheless sang a tribute to R&B singers Marvin Gaye and Jackie Wilson — both deceased at the time of the recording. In the lyrics of the song, they sing that although the two luminaries of their genre have passed away, they know that both of them continue to sing “on the nightshift.”

9. Marvin […] Say you will sing your songs
   Forevermore (evermore)
   Gonna be some sweet sounds
   Coming down on the nightshift
   I bet you’re singing proud
   Oh, I bet you’ll pull a crowd
   Gonna be a long night
   It’s gonna be all right
   On the nightshift
   Oh you found another home
   I know you’re not alone
   On the nightshift
   […]

   Jackie […] Gonna miss your sweet voice
   That soulful voice
   On the nightshift
   We all remember you
   Ooh, the songs are coming through
   At the end of a long day
   It’s gonna be okay
   On the nightshift
   You found another home
   I know you’re not alone
   On the nightshift (Commodores 1985)

This concept can also be heard in Talib Kweli’s chorus to the song “Good Mourning” (a pun on the homophonous morning) in which he sings:

10. Good mourning, good afternoon, good night
    What have you done with your life?
    Everybody time comes to be embraced by the light
    You only scared to die when you ain’t livin’ right, man
    I’m puttin’ up a hellafied fight
    (“Stay awake to the ways of the world”) (Kweli 2000)

    Again, we find that the duration of one’s life is analogous to the course of the day from morning to night. A similar concept can be found in the song “A Day in the Life of Benjamin André” in which André Benjamin’s lyrics touch on various relationships he has had throughout his life but, as expressed in the title, these interactions are equated to activities of a single day (Benjamin 2003). This is particularly significant in that the duration of
the day as an analogy for the course of life and the duration of night as an analogy for the course of death (merely a continuation of the life process in a transformed state) is part of a shared worldview of Afrikan people both on the continent and elsewhere in the global Afrikan world as seen in these and various other idioms, proverbs, songs, stories, etc. (Martínez-Ruiz 2007, Powell 2010).

In the Bakongo articulation of this shared Afrikan worldview, the sun’s position is also indicative of the literal time of day. In Figure 5, the principal hours are labeled with Roman numerals (I-IV) and identified as Lo biangudi ‘principal hours.’ Interspersed between these are the in-between hours labeled (1-4) and identified as Lo biandwelo ‘small hours.’ Again, this is an articulation of the analogy of the sun’s position from the perspective of the viewer standing at the didi dia ngolo zanzingila ‘axis/center of vitality’ at the intersection of the perpendicular Kalunga (horizontal) and Mu Kula (vertical) lines (Fu-Kiau 1994: 29).

In Figure 6, we can see the similarity between the Kalunga line and the horizon in that both serve as dividing lines at which the upper world, ku nseke, and the lower world, ku mpemba, meet.

**Structure**

Using this anthropocentric viewer’s-eye perspective in which the observer’s point of view is implicitly advanced as a valid relative and relational reference point, we see that midnight corresponds to the conception of a human being and it is also like the conception of an idea.
as illustrated in Table 1. We see twilight as analogous to pregnancy or formulation of a new story based on existing structures. Dawn is similar to birth or a naming ceremony — the ritual through which an Afrikan comes into the world — which is like the inception of a story. Morning follows the dawn in a natural progression and is very much like one’s youth or the “exposition” stage of a story. Then comes late morning, which is comparable to adolescence or the “complication” stage of the story.

Table I: Analogous Structures: Sun-Human-Story

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOLAR POSITION (DIKÈNGA)</th>
<th>HUMAN LIFE</th>
<th>STORY STRUCTURE</th>
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</thead>
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<td>I MIDNIGHT</td>
<td>CONCEPTION</td>
<td>IDEA/CONCEPTION</td>
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<tr>
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<td>PREGNANCY</td>
<td>FORMULATION (BASED ON EXISTING STRUCTURES)</td>
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<tr>
<td>II DAWN</td>
<td>BIRTH (NAMING CEREMONY)</td>
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<td>ADULTHOOD</td>
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<td>4 EVENING/NIGHT</td>
<td>JUDGMENT/ANCESTRAL REALM</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I MIDNIGHT</td>
<td>CONCEPTION</td>
<td>IDEA/CONCEPTION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 1 we see that noon is analogous to adulthood or the “climax” of the story. Afternoon is analogous to eldership or the “denouement” stage. Sunset is akin to death or the “conclusion,” the closing formula of the Anansesem ‘Ananse (Spider) story’ or Aṣọ Ọjọpá ‘Ọjọpá (Tortoise) tale.’ This stage, however, is where the Dikènga theory as
depicted in Figure 7 departs significantly from existing models of oral
narrative structure. We find that even though the sun has set, it continues to
exist in a form not readily visible to the observer. Similarly, for Afrikan
people, when a person dies he/she takes on a form not readily visible to the
average observer but, which is still understood as existing in another state.
This concept is expressed succinctly in the Akan maxim Onipa wu a, na
omvui ‘When a man dies he is not (really) dead’ (Gyekye 1987: 100). It is
also expressed in Birago Diop’s (1951) poem, Souffles ‘Breaths’ provided in
translation from the original French below:

Listen more often to things rather than beings.
Hear the fire’s voice,
Hear the voice of water.
In the wind hear the sobbing of the trees,
It is our ancestors breathing.

The dead are not gone forever.
They are in a woman’s breast,
A child’s crying, a glowing ember.
The dead are not beneath the earth,
They are in the flickering fire,
In the weeping plant, the groaning rock,
The wooded place, the home.
The dead are not dead.

Listen more often to things rather than beings.
Hear the fire’s voice,
Hear the voice of water.
In the wind hear the sobbing of the trees.
It is the breathing of our ancestors. (Diop

[...] It is the breathing of our ancestors,
Who are not gone, not beneath the ground,
Not dead.

The core idea expressed in the above poem is that energy and matter — of
which our ancestors are composed — are not created or destroyed but are
rather merely transformed into the various forms that surround us as
poignantly articulated in the poem. Indeed, if water, for example, comprises
approximately 60% of the human body, that water does not disappear upon
a person dying but is rather recycled back into the larger system as the water
in rain, lakes, clouds, and rivers. Similarly, upon death, the other tangible and
intangible elements that make up the human being are gradually released
back into the environment where they take on other forms and appearances.
In this article, the day-as-life-night-as-death analogy is extended to cover stories as well, wherein, even though a story has "ended" it continues to exist. This existence is simply in a different form in the consciousness of the individual and in the fabric of the society, among many others. For Afrikan people, upon death, a human being is called to account for his or her deeds and whether or not he or she has fulfilled his or her destiny and, then, ultimately he/she undergoes judgment (Kamalu 1998, Ephirim-Donkor 1997). One of the earliest attestations of this endogenous Afrikan concept of adjudication of the human in the afterlife is found in the Instructions of Mry kj rfr'Merikare' (ca. 2100 BCE) wherein the text states:

11. The Court that judges the wretch,
   You know they are not lenient,
   On the day of judging the miserable,
   [
   When a man remains over after death,
   His deeds are set beside him as treasure,
   [
   He who reaches them without having done wrong
   Will exist there like a god,
   Free-striding like the lords forever! (Lichtheim 1973: 101) (emphasis mine)

The period after one's life in the upper world has ended corresponds to the period after the story has "ended" and, similarly, is a time of reflection and adjudication with regard to the value of the story and values contained therein; i.e., whether or not it fulfilled its overt and/or underlying goals or its metaphorical "destiny." Subsequently, night is akin to the ancestral realm and it is also like the period in which the story's aesthetics, structures and concepts are internalized. Upon traversing this cycle, the story moves back to the position of midnight, coming back to the conception of the idea of a story which, again, is like the conception of a human being. The following YouTube videos are illustrative of what is meant in this Extended Analogy Layering (EAL), by juxtaposing images of analogous phenomena at similar stages of development. Due to space constraints, we will focus on the Lo biangudi 'principal hours' of the Dikënga hourly time segmentation cycle.


The dawn video shows dawn in various forms: dawn of the day, dawn of a human being, and also dawn of a story. This is the owia apueer 'sunrise'
(Akan), *ilà oôrin* ‘sunrise’ (Yorùbá), *nseluka* ‘sunrise’ (Kikôngo). Dawn is comparable to birth and the first ritual of one’s existence thereafter, which marks the transition from one state to another in what is known as the *isomolórùko* ‘naming ceremony’ by the Yorùbá. The video also shows the Akan *abadinto* ‘naming ceremony’ with the requisite tasting of water and drink. This opening ritual of a human’s transition from the ancestral realm to the physical world is analogous to the transition of the story from the ideational stage to its realization through the process of the storytelling performance. The Yorùbá *Alò Ìjàpà* and the Akan *Anansesem* also have parallel set formulae for the opening of a story such as the following:

13. a. *Yeṣe* se  nse  se  o!
3PL-NEG-say COMP NEG-say COMP EMPH
‘we don’t say, ‘don’t say’ (i.e. it is make-believe so virtually anything goes)

b. *Yeṣesa* soa  wo  ara!
3PL-gather place-on-head 2SG EMPH
‘we put the responsibility on you’ (i.e. it’s your turn to tell the story)

14. a. *Anansesem* ye  asisie  o!
Ananse-story be cheating EMPH
‘Ananse stories are (only) make-believe’

b. *To* no  yie!
throw 3SG well
‘tell it well’

15. a. *Abra,*  abra  o!
Falsehood, falsehood EMPH
‘make-believe, make-believe’

b. *Yóó*
okay
‘okay’

In examples (13a-15a), the initial line is the call of the storyteller while the second line (13b-15b) in each instance is the response of the collective audience: veritable “story-helpers” who are active participants in its telling via their exhortations, songs, and extemporaneous critical feedback. We find a similar phenomenon in the case of Yorùbá *Alò Ìjàpà* – the opening formula, which is exemplified below – where the second line in bold is the standard audience response while the initial line and the rest of the formula is spoken by the storyteller.
16. Àlọ { o!} 
story EMPH
‘story’
Àlọ! 
Story
‘story’
Àlọ mi dá gbàá
story 1SG.POSS strike IDEOGRAPH
‘my story strikes like this’
Àlọ mi dá gbọ́ó
story 1SG.POSS strike IDEOGRAPH
‘my story strikes like that’
Àlọ mi dá fiìiríghágbọ́ó
story 1SG.POSS strike IDEOGRAPH
‘my story strikes falling and bouncing like so’
Ò dátéří Ịjápá,
3SG.SUBJ strike-lay-head tortoise,
‘it strikes the head of the tortoise,’
Tírọkọ, ọkọ Yánnibo
of-bombax ceiba husband Y.
‘of the silk cotton tree, the husband of Yánnibo’
ídà danindanin bi ọrọ̀ ọpẹ́.
leg(s) tight like fruit palm-tree
‘with legs tight like the fruit of the palm-tree’
T’ó kólé, kólé
REL’3SG.SUBJ build-house build-house
‘Who builds houses’
i’ó fì irán bà á jé
REL’3SG.SUBJ take seat make-contact 3SG.OBJ destroy
‘Who destroys them with the seat of his shell’
Tí ò lọ t’áarin épà
REL’3SG PROG go at’middle groundnuts
‘who goes among groundnuts’
Tí ipákọ rẹ̀ ń hàn fìrìfìrì
REL occiput 3SG.POSS PROG show indistinctly
‘for whom the back of his head shows indistinctly’
Ó ni opélopé pé ọun ga
3SG say thanks to that 3SG.REPORT tall
‘who says it is thanks to the fact that he is tall’ (Babalola 1973: 1)
Obádélé Kambon: Akan Ananse Stories, Yorùbá Ìjámpà Tales, and the Dikèngà Theory

This formula may be followed up with additional subsequent calls and responses to begin the story such as:

17. a.  
\[ \text{Ní  igbà  kan} \]
At  time  one
‘Once upon a time’

b.  
\[ \text{Kan,  kan} \]
\[ \text{One,  one} \]
‘Once, once’

a.  
\[ \text{Ọba  kan  wà} \]
King  one  exist
‘There was a king’

b.  
\[ \text{Ọ  wà  bǐi  ìwà} \]
\[ 3SG  exist  like  beauty \]
‘He was there like beauty.’

These subsequent formulae make use of puns, wordplay, alliteration and other oratory devices as they further draw the audience into the story by encouraging participation. Therefore, as demonstrated above, we see clearly that both Akan and Yorùbá stories have opening formulae which mark the metaphorical “sunrise/birth” of the story maintaining the analogy between the relative solar position, the human being’s life and the progression of the story.

The Extended Analogy Layering (EAL) continues through to the climax of the story, the climax of a person’s life, and also the climax of the sun. This is known as owigvine “noon” (Akan), ọsàn gangan “noon” (Yorùbá), mbata “noon” (Kikōngo).


Examples in the noon video show the high point in the story, which corresponds to reaching the highest point in one’s career in academia such as giving one’s inaugural lecture. It is similar to being made the ruler of one’s people or country. This is the high point of one’s life. It is like when the sun reaches its highest point in the sky from the perspective of the observer. In the background of the video, Mr. Zablong Z. Abdallah sings Dagbamba praise poetry in the Dagbanli language saying that we come to this world with music and dance and we will leave the world with music and dance.
The song was selected due to its relevance in showing how we have formulae to mark the transition from one stage/state to another, as is also the case for the story.


The video in example (19) shows *Luvèmba* in its various forms and manifestations. In terms of time of day, this is the *owia atsee* "sunset" (Akan), *iwọ oorrún* "sunset" (Yorùbá), *ndimina* "sunset" (Kikôngo). This is like the closing formulae of the Yorùbá *Ijapá* tale and Akan *Ananse* stories as shown in the video. Another example of a closing formula for the Yorùbá is as follows:

20. *Idi àló mi rẹ gbàngbálákà*

   reason story 1SG.POSS this IDEO
   ‘this is the reason for my story’

   *Idi àló mi rẹ gbàngbálákà*

   reason story 1SG.POSS this IDEO
   ‘this is the reason for my story’

   *Bi ng hà puró, kí agogo ènu mi*

   COND 1SG CONT lie, should bell mouth 1SG.POSS
   má ró;

   NEG ring;
   ‘if I am lying, may the bell of my mouth not ring’

   *Bi ng ṃ bá puró, k'agogo ènu*

   COND 1SG NEG CONT lie, should’bell mouth
   mi ró l'êméta

   1SG.POSS ring in’thrice
   ‘if I am not lying, may it ring three times’

   *Ó di pò .... pò .... pò!*

   3SG become IDEO IDEO IDEO!
   ‘it rings, rings, rings’

   (Babalola 1973: 19)

Each of these closing formulae is an expression of *Luvèmba* in the *Dikènga* cosmogram.

The final major marker of transition is, at the same time, the first marker. This idea of the last being the first as well can also be seen in the traditional Akan week (and month) with Kwastada 'Sunday' being the inclusive beginning day of the week and the final day of the week at the same time. This concept is found in other parts of Africa represented as a serpent with its own tail in its mouth, most notably in Benin’s Da Ayido-Hwedo ‘Divine Rainbow Serpent’ and in Ancient Kiniy ‘Land of the Black People’ as shown in Figure 8. This Musoni stage is ọdasuom "midnight" (Akan), ọgahọ ọru “midnight” (Yoruba), n’dingu-a-nsi “midnight” (Kikongo). In the video, there is a lunar eclipse with the moon’s position in relation to the sun allowing the observer to see the exact point of midnight in relation to him/her. This is yet another example of the sun’s position, similar to the human’s position, which is yet and still analogous to the story’s position. The sun’s movement in the lower world is much like the phase after the story is told, in which it still exists having gone through a transition from one stage to another. In the African context, this is like how the human being is recognized as existing after death – merely in another state. Many Africans exhibit an understanding of the continued existence of ancestors through masquerades, music, sculptures, possession, libation, and through their words, which continue to live after them as long as their words continue to

\[\text{Indigenous name of the land – literally translating to ‘Land of Black People’ – later referred to by the Greeks as Αἰγύπτιος (Aiguptos) ‘Egypt’ (from (k)hi pth ‘Temple/enclosure of the soul of Ptah) as an example of synecdoche or pars pro toto. Notably, while (white) Eurasian scholars attempt to say Kiniy only refers to the Blackness of the soil and not the Black people, they fail to account for the fact that the Aṣòta Kiniy ‘Black People’, in their own mythology, said that they were made from the same Black soil of the Nile on the potter’s wheel of the divinity bôw ‘Khnum’!}\]
be spoken. As an Akan proverb affirms *Onipa wi a ne tekrema emporc no, na efiri teasefoo* ‘When a person dies and his/her tongue does not rot, it is because of a living person’ (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 203). In the video in example (21), Osse Kwaku mentions that he was originally told the story that he re-told back in 1955 or 1956 and he still remembers it to this date. Implicitly, this lets us know that one of the underlying functions of storytelling is to engender remembrance of the story itself (through repetition, colorful language, etc.). Lawrence Kwaku Boaten, in his interview in the video, says that his motivation for telling his story is simply just to remember his grandmother who has passed away (Kambon 2014b, Masters 2012). These interviews provide a window to the idea that different storytellers may have different goals and that these goals may even change based upon context. In other words, while there may be overt reasons for telling a story — *i.e.*, “I want/need to teach you these specific lessons” — there may also be underlying reasons — *i.e.*, “I want/need you to remember; I want/need to live on through my words.” Above and beyond the storyteller’s reasons, from the perspective of the “story-helper/listener,” different individuals may perceive different lessons from listening to the same story as the story may even take on different meanings for the same individual across space and time.

In this section, we have discussed the structure of *Alo Ijapa* and *Anansesem* using *Dikenga* as a framework for analysis and understanding. It is important to note, however, that this conception of reality is not something that the people of Kongo came up with in a vacuum, but rather is a manifestation of the maintenance of a shared cosmology dating back to Afrikan antiquity. Archaeological research shows that the earliest fossils of modern humans (*homo sapiens*) originate in the area of the source of the Nile and other adjacent river valleys, with the oldest of these fossils having been found at Kibish in the Omo River Valley, Ethiopia (McDougall, Brown, and Fleagle 2005). Therefore, it comes as no surprise that Afrikans, having traveled down the Nile Valley towards the north, would have worked out such intricate philosophical expressions with regard to solar position analogies prior to migrating to various other places of the continent. Indeed, this cyclical concept is expressed most clearly in the aphorism

\[ \text{phrt } \text{pw } \text{m} \text{h} \text{ ‘Life is a cycle’ from the ‘Conversation Between a Despairing man and His Ba (Soul)’ composed during the second golden age (ca. 2052 BCE-1778 BCE) (Faulkner 1956: 22, lines 20-21, Obenga 2004: 617). Indeed, in Kmt, Afrikans there had the same idea of four major} \]
Figure 9: Ancient Afrikan Cosmological Structure
(Kambon adapted from Moore 2011)

Wsir ‘Osiris,’ The Lord of the Underworld, as the sun at midnight (Moore 2011, Wilkinson 2003: 206). These concepts can be seen clearly in the Pyramid Texts (ca. 2780-2260 BCE), the oldest sacred texts in the world (Obenga 2004: 163). In this same vein, according to Allen (2005: 11),

The Pyramid Texts are largely concerned with the deceased’s relationship to two gods, Osiris and the Sun [Ra ‘Ra’]. Egyptologists once considered these two themes as independent views of the afterlife that had become fused in the Pyramid Texts, but more recent research has shown that both belong to a single concept of the deceased’s eternal existence after death—a view of the afterlife that remained remarkably consistent throughout ancient Egyptian history.

Further, Allen (2005: 438) describes Wsir ‘Osiris’ thusly:
Slain by his brother Seth, Osiris rests as a mummy in the middle of the Duat, where the sun unites with him at night to receive the power to come to life again at dawn. (emphasis mine) (Allen 2005: 438)

The conceptualization of the four major phases of the sun’s movement shows a shared worldview of Afrikan people from antiquity all the way to the present, as demonstrated throughout space and time in Afrika and elsewhere in the global Afrikan world. This calls for continued research into migration patterns of Afrikans from the Nile Valley to current places and spaces of habitation after having been largely driven out by successive waves
of foreign invaders who now occupy and dominate the lower (northern) Nile Valley today.

This begs the separate but related question of why in the Kôngo, the dikènga cycle is depicted as moving in a “counter-clockwise” fashion while in Kmt, the cycle moves in a “clockwise” fashion. One possibility is that, from the northern hemisphere—where our Afrikan/Black ancestors were located prior to migration away from the lower Nile Valley — if one observes the movement of the stars, such as that depicted at the temple of Dendera in ancient Kmt one sees that the movement of all constellations is in a counter-clockwise fashion as shown in Figure 10. In contemporary Akan culture, the shaking of hands, likewise, occurs in a counter-clockwise manner as does dancing at traditional spiritual ceremonies known as akom. In another Afrikan combat art called Capoeira (originally Kipura), in the volta-ao-mundo, cyclical movements are also done in a counter-clockwise manner (Talmon-Chvaicer 2008: 29-30). The similarity that may be intuited from these similarities across space and time is that each of these counter-clockwise movements may have something to do with being in alignment with the cosmos on a very deep level. An ancient teaching of the Nile Valley says “as above, so below” (Chandler 2000: 18, Martin 2008: 957). Thus, it seems that the movements of celestial phenomena can serve as an apt metaphor and ideal model for the movements of terrestrial phenomena. It is interesting to note, however, that in ancient Kmt, east =findViewById izby ‘east’ was associated with icontains izby ‘left-hand’ while icontains inmt ‘west’ was associated with icontains innt ‘right (-hand), right(-side), the ‘West’. Thus, the Kmt(yw) ‘Black people’ were always facing their source and their land of origin – the interior of Afrika – and the equator where the sun’s intense rays manifested in their richly melanated Blackness. This recognition of the causative link between the sun and their Blackness – which formed the very core of their identity – to no small degree influenced their heliocentric worldview in which the sun was central in all aspects of life and the afterlife. Because the east was seen as left, Figure 9 reflects this orientation and perspective with relation to the four major phases of the sun.
In an alternative explanation to the celestial one offered above, the differences in terms of clockwise (Northern Hemisphere Nile Valley) and counter-clockwise (Southern Hemisphere Congo River Basin) variants may be wholly solar. In other words, the variants may be based on the ecliptic due to the fact that, from the perspective of a person in the northern hemisphere facing the equator, the sun would appear to rise on the left and set on the right. From the position of a person in the southern hemisphere, however, the sun would appear to rise on the right and set on the left.

In conclusion, with regard to structure, the Dikënga theory of structural analysis is one manifestation of a shared Afrikan worldview. Dikënga can be understood in the context of the sun’s movement, the human life cycle, and also in the development of the story. This extended analogy layering (EAL) shows how Anansesem or Aló Ìjápá, in and of themselves, can be viewed as living suns. Transformation is key in understanding structure and transition from one stage to another as marked in the story, as marked in the human being’s life, and as marked in the sun’s movement along with many other phenomena that could be analyzed using the EAL method.

It is also clear that stories are not fixed artifacts. As “living suns,” they come to life in performance. When they are not performed, they are not alive but are, rather, functionally dead – not in the modern European sense of death, but in the prototypically Afrikan sense wherein death is conceptualized as a continued/continual/continuous transition from one stage to another stage. This notion can easily be reconciled with the law of conservation of energy in physics which states that the total energy of an isolated system cannot change. In other words, it is conserved over time. In other words, energy cannot be created or destroyed, but rather simply changes form (Planck 1927). This is not unlike the concept of reincarnation and repetition in a changed form. It should be noted that one of the first attestations of the idea of rebirth can be found in the Nile Valley concept of Whm-mswt ‘rebirth, renaissance’ famously attested in the Horus name of Horus, In-n-mt ‘Amenemhat’ as Whm-mswt ‘The one who repeated births’ (Lundström 2016a, Dickson 2006: 57). The term was also applied to the later Ramesside period known by the same name and thought to have begun in the 19th reignal year of Ramesses XI (Lundström 2016b).

Another major aspect of Dikënga is that the upper world (Ku nseke) is mirrored by the lower world (Ku mpëmba) and vice versa. Thus, there are complementary movements in the visible upper world that are paralleled in
the invisible lower world. The aforementioned parallel movements wherein one is traversing the upper world while another is traversing the lower world may be termed the principle of "Complementary Inversion" (CI). On another level, this CI may explain why, in various Afrikan societies including that of the Akan and Yorùbá, it is the elder who does the naming of newborns at naming ceremonies because the elder is the one who is best positioned to recognize his or her own grandparents upon their reincarnation. The undergirding concept here is that as a person moves through the world and life from birth to death, at the same time, one’s grandparent is moving through the underworld in a similar fashion only to “die” there and be reborn back here into what, from the perspective of the living, is the upper portion (Ephirim-Donkor 1997). This understanding is why countless Afrikan people throughout the global Afrikan world demonstrate an understanding of rebirth and reincarnation. This philosophical thought is enshrined in Yorùbá names such as Babátúnđé ‘father again arrives’ and Yéjídé ‘mother wakes (and) arrives.’ We find a similar phenomenon in Akan, wherein Nana translates to both grandparent AND grandchild at the same time. As such, babies are reincarnated with their previously held titles intact and, therefore, we find names such as Nana Yaw ‘elder/grandparent Yaw’ even applied to children as well as other names such as Ababio ‘has come again.’ We see related phenomena in instances of various survival names such as Sumina ‘rubbish heap’ and Yempew(o) ‘we do not want you’ given to trick the newborn’s playmates in the ancestral realm into leaving the child alone so that he/she may survive in the realm of the living (Obeng 2001: 98, 101). We see that this CI is something that is marked in names due to its significance with regard to an understanding of the cosmos as manifested in the Dikènga cosmogram. When Dikènga is taken out of the human context and applied to stories and storytelling, we can see stories in a similar fashion as occurring either in the upper world or the lower world.

While the argument could be made for the telling of stories corresponding to passing through Ku mpènìba – the lower world and realm of the immaterial – for the most part we view the lower world as where stories, once told, transform into the stuff from which remembrance, reflection, internalization, personalization, and reformulation are made. Thus, if the Ku mpènìba portion is missing or incomplete, it means that the story was not told well enough to engender remembrance, reflection, and other underlying functions for which the story is told. Again, this is parallel to how human life is conceived as cyclical in that one’s life in Ku nseke foreshadows how one’s continuation of life in Ku mpènìba will be. According to Fu-Kiau:
Time, for the Kongo, is a cyclical “thing.” It has no beginning and no end. Thanks to dínga (events), the concept of time is understood and can be understandable. These dínga, be they natural or artificial, biological or ideological, material or immaterial, constitute what is known as n’kama mia ntangu in Kikongo, that is, the “dams of time.” (Fu-Kiau 1994: 20) (emphasis in original)

In this analogy, time is conceptualized as flowing like a river, but there are intervening dams or cataracts that mark different points along its course. In this section, we have primarily addressed the main markers along the course: Conception, Birth, Maturity and Death. However, within these, there are smaller repetitions (Fulu kiandwelo), which also serve to mark time. Such phenomena may include points of significant transition or the repetition of episodes. These smaller markers also serve a functional role to structure the tales. As such, they are functional for the oratory/literary artist and the audience. For the oral (and/or written) literary artist, these smaller n’kama mia ntangu are functional because they help him/her hang on to and repeat key phrases that may have been made up extemporaneously in front of a live audience full of potentially critical participants. Repetition ensures that there will be no need to make up new phrases on the spot in the context of the pressure cooker that is live performance. Repetition is also used aesthetically for imbuing an artistic quality to the story while simultaneously serving to aid remembrance for both the storyteller and for the listener alike. Repetition can also provide order, structure and familiarity in the context of an otherwise chaotic landscape wherein anything can happen. Additionally, episodic repetition (via Fulu kiangud/fulu kiandwelo) may serve to organize the plot of the story (Okpewho 1992: 76-77). As such, while one can view the entire story as a large cyclical pattern (Dikènga), one can see smaller repetitions within the larger repetition. In other words, there is a Dikènga within a Dikènga within yet another Dikènga. This phenomenon of micro patterning like the macro structure could be thought of along the lines of fractal patterns within fractal patterns where smaller patterned repetitions resemble the larger scale patterned repetitions (Eglash 1999). In other words, as above (i.e., large-scale), so below (i.e., small-scale). Thus, the structure of these tales is functional and meta-theoretical on multiple levels.

In this article, we have demonstrated worldview correlations and structural parallels between Akan Ananse stories and Yorùbá Ìjápá tales using the Dikènga cosmogram as a framework and Extended Analogy Layering (EAL) as a method of understanding situated in the temporal/spatial Afrikan context.
Conclusions

In conclusion, stories help the listener to understand that time and space are cyclical, which is something that has been known by Afrikan people from ancient times. This understanding may be contrasted with the notion more commonly associated with prototypical Eurasian societies in which time is generally seen as taking place in linear motion. According to Mengyu and Prosser (In Press):

The scientists and philosophers after the Renaissance followed Aristotle’s suit, and they thought of time as a kind of object in linear motion as well [...] The physical interpretation of absolute time in linear motion, together with industrialization and civilizational progress helps cultivate the future-time orientation in most countries of the western world (Mengyu and Prosser In Press) (emphasis mine)

However, as Afrikan scholars, it may behoove us to be careful of Eurasian claims regarding the so-called universality of their culturally-specific ideas including the notion that time is always linear, among others (Ani 1994). Such notions may not be appropriate or fitting in the Afrikan context especially in light of the fact that by and large Eurasians, at one time, also thought that the world was flat (Simck 1996). At that same time that Eurasians were saying this, Afrikans such as Abu Bakr II and others before him had already travelled to the western hemisphere where they left evidence of their presence in the form of huge multi-ton monuments such as the Olmec heads (as shown in Figure 11) of Tres Zapotes, San Lorenzo and La Venta in what is now modern-day Mexico (Van Sertima 1976). Given the preponderance of evidence there can be no doubt as to the Afrikan’s advanced knowledge of the circular nature of spatial realm commensurate with Afrikan knowledge of the temporal and material.

While it seems that after interacting with Afrikans, pale Eurasians have updated their concept of space in terms of moving towards a more Afrikan understanding that the world is actually round, for the most part, they have neglected to necessarily update their concept of time as an essential aspect of understanding the space-time continuum. While it seems that after interac-

Figure 1: Author posing with Olmec Head replica from Mexico in Addis Ababa, 2015 (Photo Credit Terrence Johnson)
-ting with Afrikans, pale Eurasians have updated their concept of space in terms of moving towards a more Afrikan understanding that the world is actually round. For the most part, they have neglected to necessarily update their concept of time as an essential aspect of understanding the space-time continuum. The continuum between time and space is also found in the concepts of \( \mathbb{D} \) ‘continuous spatial eternity’ and \( \mathbb{H} \) ‘recurrent temporal eternity,’ which were written adjacent to each other to convey complementary aspects of infinity /eternity in scores of texts throughout the history of ancient \( \text{Kmt. Dikênga} \) provides us with a prototypically Afrikan understanding of space AND time as cyclical. Indeed, as evinced on the sarcophagus of \( \text{Wrs-nfr} \) ‘Wereshnefer,’ (at the center of which is a “living sun”) as shown in Figure 12, conceptions of the world as round pre-date Eurasian claims to “discovering” this ancient Afrikan knowledge by

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7 The winged sun symbol, which appears at the center of the sarcophagus relief is attested at least from ca. 2487-2475 BCE to the reign of \( S\text{hw-r} \) ‘Sahure,’ if not earlier to ca. 2575–2551 BCE during the reign of \( S\text{-nfr-w} \) ‘Sneferu.’ (Shaw and Nicholson 1995: 305). Expounding upon this concept, it is interesting to note the fact that one of the main appellations of the ruler in \( \text{Kmt} \) was \( s\text{r} \) ‘Son of the Sun.’
well over 1,000-2,000 years, by conservative estimates. Further, as can be seen on the sarcophagus and in the Dikènga cosmogram, because the human being is seen as a “living sun,” the anthropocentric model and the heliocentric model are actually one and the same, as the movements of the microcosm are a reflection of the movements of the macrocosm and vice-versa. We find that the view from Afrikan antiquity parallels the view from traditional Afrika. According to Fu-Kiau:

When you have a circle of the Kongo cosmogram, the center is seen as the eternal flame. It is a way to come closer to the core of the community. If someone is suffering, they say “you are outside the circle, be closer to the fire.” To stand on the cosmogram is to tie a social knot, bringing people together. Dikenga is from the verb kenga, which means “to take care, to protect,” but also the flame or fire from inside the circle, to build and give life (Fu-Kiau 2001b) (emphasis mine).

In other words, this phenomenon constitutes a fractal within a fractal. Thus, we see that for the Bakôngo as well, the human is at the center, yet the human is seen as a “living sun,” making the model both anthropocentric and heliocentric simultaneously and without contradiction (Fu-Kiau 1991: 8, 9, 30, 46). Interestingly, modern-day scientists are now coming to understand what Afrikans understood, articulated and according to which they lived several thousand years ago. According to noted astrophysicist Dr. Neil deGrasse Tyson:

Stars die and are born in places like this one — a stellar nursery. They condense like raindrops from giant clouds of gas and dust. They get so hot that the nuclei of the atoms fuse together deep within them to make the oxygen we breathe, the carbon in our muscles, the calcium in our bones, the iron in our blood. All of it was cooked in the fiery hearts of long-vanished stars. You, me, everyone we are made of star stuff.

[...] The planets, the stars, the galaxies; We, ourselves. and all of life. The same star stuff (Tyson 2014) (emphasis mine).

This apparent “modern” scientific revelation can be dated back to over 4,000 years ago to the Coffin Texts ca. 2060 - 1785 BCE, written in Kmt, wherein the texts expound upon “The Four Great Achievements of Ra at Creation Time”:

Words of The One of Hidden Names, Lord of the Universe;
Says he before those who calm the storm during the voyage of [Ra’s] companions:
[...] I accomplished four great acts
inside the portal of the horizon. *

[...]

I created the deities from my sweat,
and humans from the tears of my eye (Obenga 2004: 120-121) (emphasis mine).

With Eurasians and those who identify closely with Eurasian history finally starting to understand what the Afrikan has been saying since antiquity—that we are made of star stuff—it is not lost on this author that the reemergence of this knowledge is, itself, an example of the cyclical conception of time so common throughout Afrika. The cyclical conception of time is similarly found in the following Bakôngo proverb:

22. Ma’kwenda! Ma’kwiza!
    matter’go! matter’come
    ‘What goes on (now), will come back (later)’ (Fu-Kiau 1994: 33)

Similar to the law of inertia, according to Fu-Kiau, “What flows in a cyclical motion will remain in the motion. Time is cyclical, and so is life and all its ramifications that make change possible through the process of marking ‘the dams of time’” (Fu-Kiau 1994: 33).

A parallel proverb is found among the Akan:

23. Abirekyie se: "Deef e-ba-ba
     goat says: REL 3SG.INAN-FUT-come
     a-ba dada.
     PERF-come already
     ‘The goat says “That which will come has already come.”’
     (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 47)

Similarly, a Yorùbá poem says:

24. Àkòkò ń lo, àkòkò ń bò.
    time PROG go, time PROG come
    ‘Time is going, time is coming.’ (Schleicher 1998: 7)

While in proverbial form, the non-linear nature of time is stated in the following maxim:

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*i.e., at the “dawn” of creation.*
25. Igba kii to lo bii orere.

"Time is unlike a straight line." (Ayoade 1984: 17)

This is in stark contrast with the archetypal Eurasian concept of space (i.e. the world) as flat and the contemporary Eurasian model which still views time as flat. The persistence of this archaic Eurasian notion is still readily observed via terms such as “timelines,” “storylines,” etc., as well as in other linguistic and conceptual baggage attached to this prototypically Eurasian mode of thinking.

In this article, we have argued that it is imperative for Afrikan people to use endogenous Afrikan philosophical and theoretical frameworks to analyze indigenous Afrikan phenomena. We have gone further by going beyond mere exhortation to actually using such a framework to analyze phenomena from different parts of the Afrikan world to show an underlying unicity of worldview. We argue that this common foundation of Afrikan thought is readily evident irrespective of its various and diverse manifestations. Indeed, the shared Afrikan worldview can be understood as one entity with many derivative branches. A similar concept can be found in one of the oldest attestations of monotheism as found in the Papyrus of Any 'Ani' ca. 1600 BCE wherein it states that "God is one and alone and none other existeth with him [...] thou one thou only one whose arms are many [...] thou one, thou only one who has no second" (Budge 1895: 85, 113). By the same token, Akan, Yorubá, and Bakôngo culturo-linguistic phenomena can be thought of as various manifestations or "arms" of a shared foundational Afrikan worldview.

In this paper, it has been demonstrated that the application of endogenous cosmological, philosophical, theoretical, and conceptual frameworks can provide innovative perspectives and additional insight to our understanding of the structure of Akan Ananse and Yorùbá Òjánpá stories as well as the shared Afrikan worldview, which is the common foundation from which they have arisen (and continue to arise). In conclusion, we will come back to the subject of worldview with which we began so that this article, itself, may also follow a Dikênga-like structure through the following quote:

"Díadi nzá-Kôngo kandongila: Mono i kadi kita dinga-dinga (kwenda-vutukisa) kinzungidila ye didi dia ngolo zanzingila. Ngiina, kadi yateka kala ye kulantula ye ngina vutuka kala ye kaluñula. Here is what the Kongolese Cosmology taught me: I am (a going-and-coming-back-being) around the center of vital forces. I am because I was and re-was before, and that I will be and re-be again." (Fu-Kiau 2001a: xi)
As the sun rises, sets and rises again, so too does the human being and the Afrikan story.

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